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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [UNHRC](#) [CI](#)  
SUBJECT: SOUNDING CHILE ON 2007 HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL  
CANDIDACY

REF: A. STATE 10652  
[1](#)B. SANTIAGO 0143  
[1](#)C. 06 SANTIAGO 0847

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Emi Yamauchi for reasons 1.4(b)  
and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) The GOC plans to run a candidate for the Human Rights Council in 2008, but may be open to running in 2007. Per Reftel A, EPOL Counselor met with Acting Director for Multilateral Affairs Patricio Acuna January 31. United Nations Affairs Section Chief Patricio Utreras and Poloff also attended the meeting. Utreras served in Chile's mission in Geneva through 2006.

[1](#)2. (C) Acuna confirmed that Chile had planned to run for a GRULAC seat on the Human Rights Council (HRC) in 2008. Chile appreciated the U.S. expression of support for a Chilean candidacy in 2007, and Acuna said he would explore with other sections of the Foreign Ministry whether Chile was in a position to pursue a seat this year. Human rights is "a constant and basic preoccupation for Chile." However, the MFA was interested in several other positions in UN bodies also important to Chile's foreign policy agenda. A decision to run for the HRC this year would have to be coordinated with the Candidacies office and other interested sections.

[1](#)3. (C) EPOL Counselor stressed that 2007 would be a key year in establishing the HRC's program of work and deciding on its mechanisms and structures. FM Foxley had told the Ambassador (ref B) that Chile is trying to send a message to other countries in the region that the Chilean path is the only one that leads to political stability and a healthy democracy. Running for the HRC in 2007 would reinforce that message. It was important that strong democracies take an active role this year in shaping the HRC before it falls into the same vices that beset the Human Rights Commission.

[1](#)4. (C) Utreras stated that the UN General Assembly had "not finished the job" when it created the HRC, falling short in creating basic conditions for serving on the HRC and leaving important issues like method of work and procedures undefined. This uncertainty had created a "tangled thicket" of competing interests in forming the HRC's mission and agenda. The ensuing complications and contradictions were unlikely to be resolved in the HRC's next session, regardless of the deadline established for 2007.

[1](#)5. (C) Acuna said "institutions do not form in a vacuum," and that in many ways, because of the broader political

climate in the UN, the HRC was reconstructing itself as the Human Rights Commission. Unfortunately, many of the most important attributes of the Commission, such as issuing country-specific resolutions and naming rapporteurs and assessment missions had grown organically out of 50 years of work. The creation of the HRC without institutionalizing these practices had put them in doubt. Chile had pressed aggressively in the HRC working groups to ensure the HRC had teeth, and would continue to take an activist role. Having a vote could help in that work.

¶6. (C) Acuna was interested in knowing what other GRULAC countries were pursuing HRC seats in 2007, or had expressed interest ex-officio. Poloff said that to date, no other countries had declared their candidacies. The U.S. was approaching Chile and some other countries to gauge their interest. We understood that Argentina would go off the HRC this year but run again in 2008. The U.S. had not yet decided whether to run in our regional group. Acuna reiterated that the MFA would have to consider its other goals and priorities for 2007 UN elections, but that he would investigate the idea of an HRC run.

¶7. (C) Comment: Both Acuna and Utreras seemed visibly pleased that the U.S. was reaching out to Chile to take up a seat on the HRC in 2007. Given that February is vacation month in Chile and relatively few officials will be working in the Foreign Ministry, Post does not expect a definitive answer in the next few weeks. The seed has been planted and Post will cultivate it as the opportunity presents.  
KELLY